



Public Notice

**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Louisville District

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Closing Date:
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Please address all comments and inquiries to:
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Workshop on the Eastern Kentucky Headwater Stream Functional Assessment Protocol

The Louisville District will conduct a workshop on the Eastern Kentucky Headwater Stream Functional Assessment Protocol.

Location:

Hazard, KY
The Forum at the Hal Rogers Center
101 Bulldog Lane
Hazard, Kentucky 41701

When:

Wednesday December 10, 2003
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Over the past several years, the scientific community, government agencies, and the general public have become increasingly aware of the role headwater streams play in maintaining environmental quality. This awareness has led to expanded efforts in the stewardship and management of headwater resources and increased research into critical headwater stream processes. The Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) plays an important role in regulating impacts to headwater streams. Section 404 of the Act directs the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to administer the 404 Regulatory Program (404) for permitting the discharge of dredged or fill material in "waters of the United States". This, by definition, includes headwater streams that are part of a tributary system encompassing navigable waters. Application requests for authorization to discharge dredged or fill material in "waters of the United States" undergo a review that includes assessing the impact of the proposed project on the functions and values of the aquatic environment. Results of the assessment are a component of the evaluation required in a permit decision.

An interagency team including members from the Corps, EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Kentucky Division of Water (KDOW), and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) was

Operations Division
Regulatory Branch (South)
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assembled to address the needs for a headwater stream assessment procedure that would accommodate the 404 programmatic requirements in the Eastern Kentucky Coalfield Region. The team considered a variety of methods that have been developed to assess stream quality. EPA's Rapid Bioassessment Protocol (RBP) (Barbour *et al.*, 1999) was the assessment procedure singled out by the interagency team as having the greatest utility for the program's needs. This protocol has undergone extensive peer review and is based on sound ecological principles. The procedure also aims to be rapid and, thus, accommodates the time and resource limitations of the 404 program. This workshop plans to outline an approach for using the RBP in a manner that assesses overall stream ecosystem integrity and also satisfies the technical and programmatic requirements of the 404 program.